RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

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In this issue... A NEW AND CUNNING VERSION OF..... **THE KIDNAP RACKET!**

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INSPECTOR J.J. O'MALLEY CRACKS...

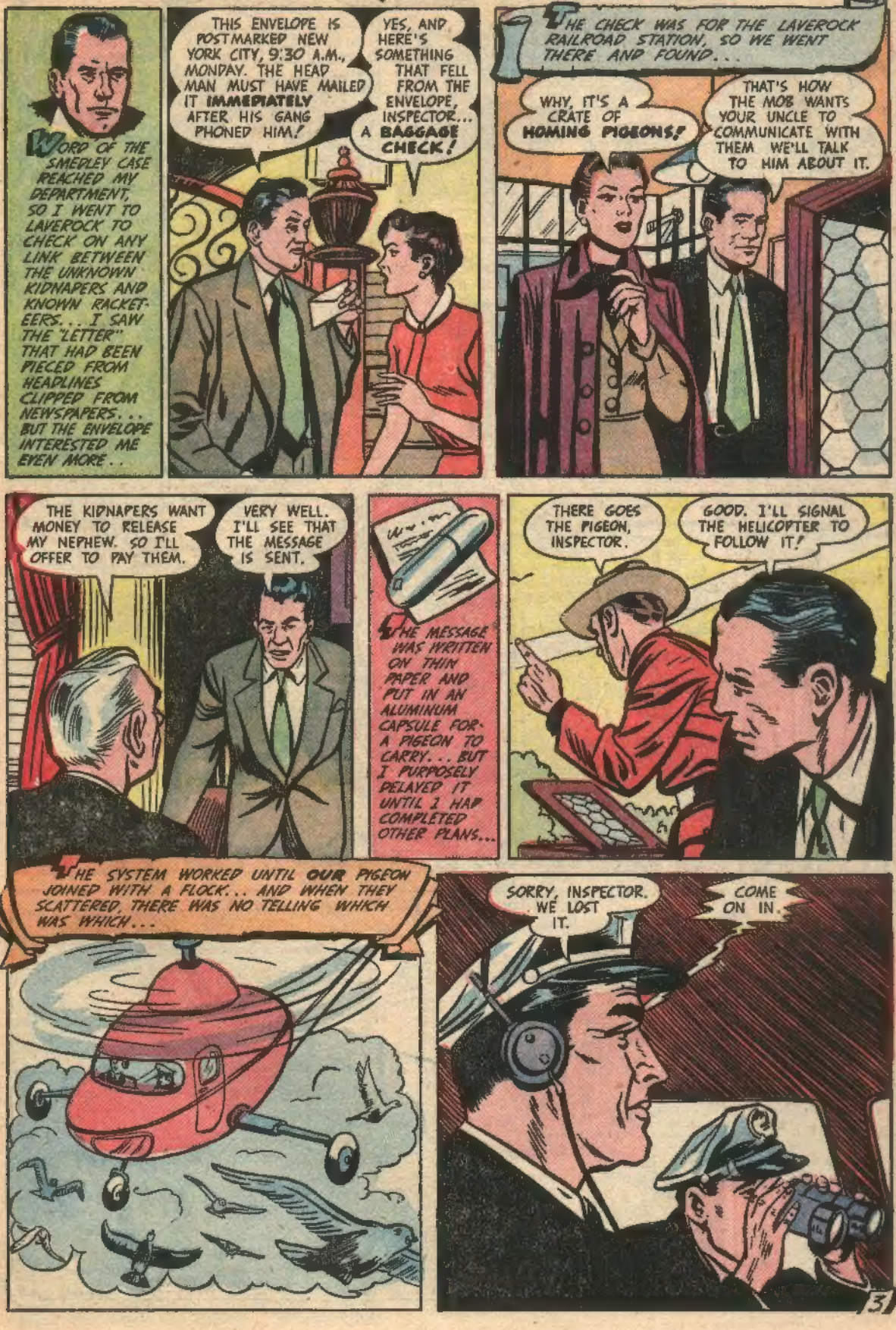
THE KIDNAP RACKET!

HOW ABOUT GIVING MY NEWSPAPER THE FULL DETAILS OF THE SMEDLEY KIDNAP CASE, INSPECTOR? ALONG WITH OTHER FACTS, SUCH AS WHEN KIDNAPING FIRST BEGAN.
THAT TAKES US A LONG WAY BACK, CLEAR INTO ANCIENT HISTORY! LET ME GIVE A FEW EXAMPLES...
IN HIS YOUTH THE FAMOUS JULIUS CAESAR WAS CAPTURED AND HELD FOR RANSOM BY PIRATES WHO ROVED THE COAST OF ITALY... HE LATER CAUGHT UP WITH THEM AND HAD THEM EXECUTED...
DURING AMERICAN COLONIAL DAYS, INDIANS RAIDED SETTLEMENTS SEEKING CAPTIVES FOR RANSOM...
IN THE MIDDLE AGES, KING RICHARD THE LION-HEARTED, RETURNING TO ENGLAND FROM THE CRUSADES, WAS HELD PRISONER BY ROBBER BARONS... FOR A PRICE... IN THE CASTLE OF DURRENSTEIN...

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

While a century later, western outlaws specialized in the same outrageous practice...
Through the horse and buggy days, to the era of the automobile and the air-plane... always the law demanded full penalty when kidnapers were brought to justice... so we come to the case of Carlin Smedley, who lived with his wife Loretta at the home of their uncle Jerome Smedley in Laverock on the Hudson...
Officially, it began at 7:30 A.M., Monday, April 14th, 1952...
Hurry now, Carlin. You must catch the 8:05 to reach the office by 9:30!
Come quickly, both of you! I saw that strange car again. It went through the gate across the road!
It had a Connecticut license -
What right has such a car to be snooping around here?
Easy, uncle. Maybe they just want to buy the old Breslaw place. I'll ask them if I see them!
So Carlin Smedley cut through the old gateway and disappeared as if the ground had swallowed him! He didn't come home that Monday night, but the fact was not suspected until Tuesday morning.
I just looked in Carlin's room and found he didn't come in last night!
He's been kidnaped! Read this letter the mailman just delivered! Then phone the police!
my men watched your house From gates... Saw you Shake came outside door... they captured your nephew and called me in new York... We Want money --
Within an hour the area was alive with state police The hunt for the kidnapers was on!
My husband never did get to the station. His friend Tom Morrison says he wasn't on the train
We'll make a search, then check with New York.

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION


WORD OF THE SMEDLEY CASE REACHED MY DEPARTMENT, SO I WENT TO LAVEROCK TO CHECK ON ANY LINK BETWEEN THE UNKNOWN KIDNAPERS AND KNOWN RACKETEERS... I SAW THE "LETTER" THAT HAD BEEN PIECED FROM HEADLINES CLIPPED FROM NEWSPAPERS... BUT THE ENVELOPE INTERESTED ME EVEN MORE..
THIS ENVELOPE IS POSTMARKED NEW YORK CITY, 9:30 A.M., MONDAY. THE HEAD MAN MUST HAVE MAILED IT IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS GANG PHONED HIM!
YES, AND HERE'S SOMETHING THAT FELL FROM THE ENVELOPE, INSPECTOR... A BAGGAGE CHECK!
THE CHECK WAS FOR THE LAVEROCK RAILROAD STATION, SO WE WENT THERE AND FOUND...
WHY, IT'S A CRATE OF HOMING PIGEONS!
THAT'S HOW THE MOB WANTS YOUR UNCLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM WE'LL TALK TO HIM ABOUT IT.
THE KIDNAPERS WANT MONEY TO RELEASE MY NEPHEW. SO I'LL OFFER TO PAY THEM.
VERY WELL. I'LL SEE THAT THE MESSAGE IS SENT.
THE MESSAGE WAS WRITTEN ON THIN PAPER AND PUT IN AN ALUMINUM CAPSULE FOR A PIGEON TO CARRY... BUT I PURPOSELY DELAYED IT UNTIL I HAD COMPLETED OTHER PLANS...
THERE GOES THE PIGEON, INSPECTOR.
GOOD. I'LL SIGNAL THE HELICOPTER TO FOLLOW IT!
THE SYSTEM WORKED UNTIL OUR PIGEON JOINED WITH A FLOCK... AND WHEN THEY SCATTERED, THERE WAS NO TELLING WHICH WAS WHICH...
SORRY, INSPECTOR. WE LOST IT.
COME ON IN.

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

NATURALLY, WE SAID NOTHING—NOT EVEN TO JEROME CARLIN OR HIS NIECE LORETTA... ABOUT OUR EFFORT TO TRACK THE PIGEON... THE NEXT DAY, LORETTA ANSWERED THE TELEPHONE...

WHAT'S THAT? YOU WANT MY UNCLE TO PUT UP $25,000 TO RANSOM CARLIN? I'M TO BRING THE MONEY... WHERE? WHY... WHY, I'VE BEEN CUT OFF.

I'M TO MEET THE KIDNAPERS, **ALONE**, WITH $25,000... OVER AT THE BRESLAW PLACE!

I'LL GET THE MONEY FROM THE BANK RIGHT AWAY! WE'LL SEND A PIGEON TO NOTIFY THEM.

BY NOW, THE TRAIL WAS GETTING SO HOT WE COULDN'T TAKE CHANCES... BUT MEANWHILE, I HAD CALLED IN A PIGEON EXPERT...

WE'LL PLUCK A FEW FEATHERS FROM THIS PIGEON'S WINGS, INSPECTOR...

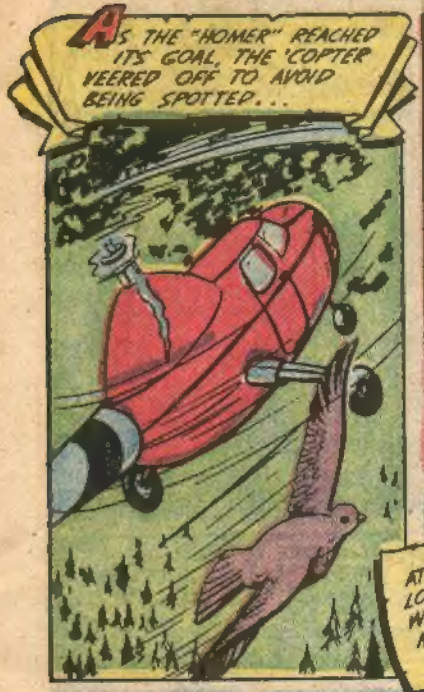
...AND NOW WATCH IT!

I'LL SIGNAL THE HELICOPTER CREW! THAT'S **THEIR** JOB!

THIS TIME, THE 'COPTER HELD THE TRAIL, CLEAR TO THE RUGGED FOOTHILLS OF NEW JERSEY...

BOY! THAT PLUCKED PIGEON IS EASIER TO SPOT THAN A SITTING DUCK!

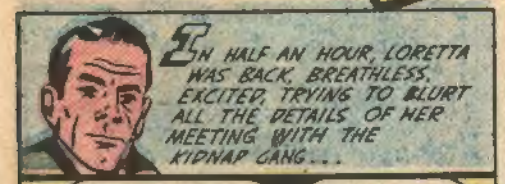
HE'S GOING TO SETTLE IN THAT WOODS, SO WE'D BETTER VEER AWAY!



AND AS SOON AS THE CREW REPORTED IT, WORD WAS FLASHED TO LOCAL ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WHO MOVED IN SECRETLY TO SURROUND THE WOODED AREA...

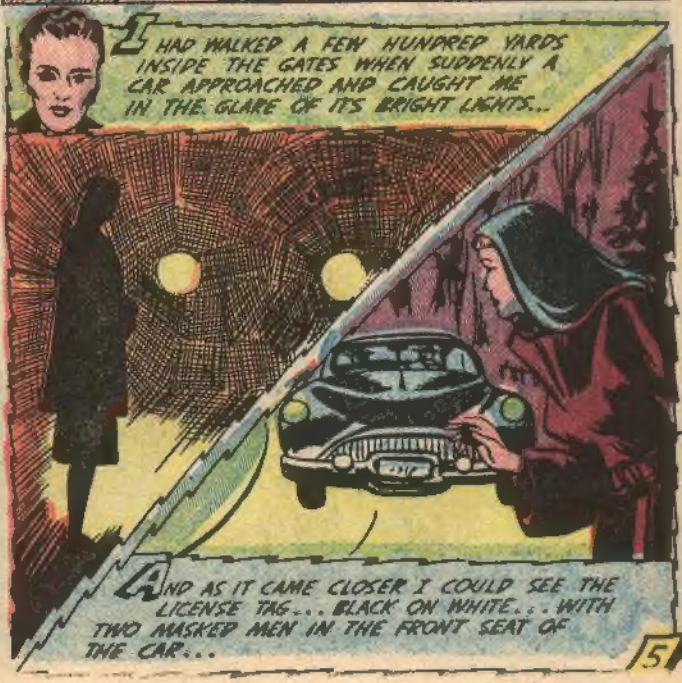
AT DUSK, LORETTA WENT TO MEET THE KIDNAPERS...

HERE IS THE $25,000... AND YOU CAN ASSURE THE KIDNAPERS THAT WE ARE NOT WATCHING THEM.
WE'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU IN YOUR UNCLE'S HOUSE.



IN HALF AN HOUR, LORETTA WAS BACK, BREATHLESS, EXCITED, TRYING TO BLURT ALL THE DETAILS OF HER MEETING WITH THE KIDNAP GANG...

I GAVE THEM THE MONEY... THEY SAID WE'LL FIND CARLIN IN A SHACK IN THE NEW JERSEY WOODS, JUST EAST OF THUNDER CREEK...
THAT COMES LATER, LORETTA. RIGHT NOW, GIVE US THE EXACT DETAILS OF YOUR MEETING WITH THE KIDNAPERS.


I HAD WALKED A FEW HUNDRED YARDS INSIDE THE GATES WHEN SUDDENLY A CAR APPROACHED AND CAUGHT ME IN THE GLARE OF ITS BRIGHT LIGHTS...
AND AS IT CAME CLOSER I COULD SEE THE LICENSE TAG... BLACK ON WHITE... WITH TWO MASKED MEN IN THE FRONT SEAT OF THE CAR...

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

THEY TURNED OFF THE CAR LIGHTS AND GOT OUT. THEY USED FLASHLIGHTS TO COUNT THE MONEY AND I COULDN'T SEE THEIR FACES IN THE DARK...

THEN THEY GUIDED ME TOWARD THE GATES AND I COULD SEE THE LIGHTS OF THE HOUSE ACROSS THE ROAD... SO I STUMBLED BACK HERE...

... AND THAT'S ALL.

I'LL FIND THOSE RASCALS AND FIX THEM!

EASY NOW, MR. SMEDLEY. WE'D BETTER FIND YOUR NEPHEW FIRST!

I CONTACTED THE STATE POLICE AND WE HEADED OVER INTO NEW JERSEY...

AT LAST REPORT, THERE WERE FIFTY MEN COVERING THE WOODS WHERE THE PIGEON WENT!

GOOD. WE CAN MOVE RIGHT IN AS SOON AS WE GET THERE!

POLICE

LOOKS LIKE THERE'S SOMEBODY IN THAT SHACK!

THINK WE'RE CLOSE ENOUGH TO RUSH IT, INSPECTOR?

I'D SAY WE WERE. LET'S GO!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

IT'S CARLIN SMEDLEY! I'LL CUT HIM LOOSE WHILE YOU SEARCH THE CABIN.
NOBODY UP THERE BUT THESE PIGEONS!
WHEN DID YOU LAST SEE THE KIDNAPERS, CARLIN? HOW MANY WERE THERE?
THERE WERE THREE...
BUT ONLY TWO OF THEM GRABBED ME ON MY WAY TO THE STATION ON MONDAY MORNING...
COME ON, YOU. YOU'RE GOING WITH US.
WE'LL PHONE THE BIG SHOT, SO HE CAN SEND WORD TO YOUR UNCLE.
THEY BROUGHT ME TO THIS CABIN AND TOOK TURNS WATCHING ME UNTIL THE BIG SHOT ARRIVED. HE WAS MASKED TOO...
SORRY, CHUM, BUT WE'RE TAKING NO CHANCES ON LETTING YOU ESCAPE. WE'LL TAKE TURNS WATCHING YOU UNTIL YOUR UNCLE OFFERS TO PAY UP. THEN I'LL SEND THE BOYS TO GET THE CASH!
HOW LONG I WAS KEPT PRISONER, I COULDN'T TELL... I WAS HALF ASLEEP WHEN VOICES WOKE ME AND I SAW MY CAPTORS COUNTING THE RANSOM MONEY...
THERE YOU ARE, BOSS. IT COMES TO THE FULL TWENTY-FIVE GRAND
OKAY, BOYS. WE GO FIFTY-FIFTY. HALF FOR ME AND YOU SPLIT THE REST. NOW LET'S LAM.
THEY LEFT AND I HEARD THEIR CAR SPEED AWAY THROUGH THE WOODS. MINUTES SEEMED ENDLESS UNTIL YOU ARRIVED, INSPECTOR...
NATURALLY. BUT THAT'S ALL ENDED NOW. WE'LL GO OVER TO YOUR UNCLE'S HOUSE AND COMPARE NOTES.

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

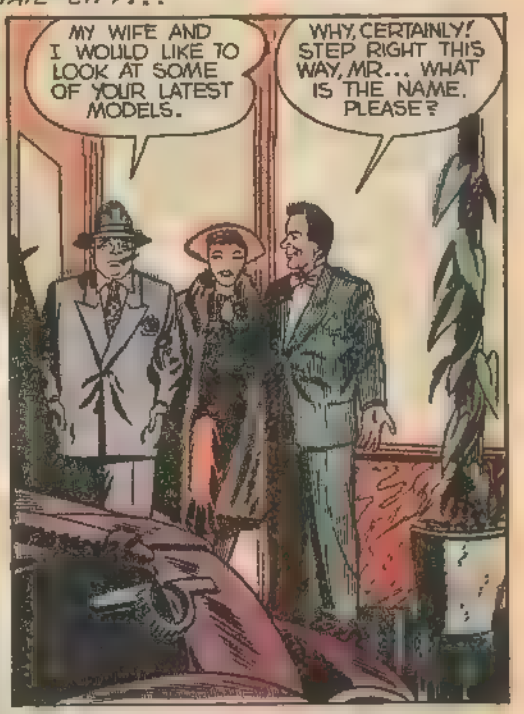
BACK AT THE SMEDLEY HOMESTEAD IN LAVEROCK, I SPRANG MY BIG SURPRISE...
I TELL YOU, INSPECTOR, YOU MUST TRACK DOWN THESE KIDNAPERS... ALL THREE OF THEM..
I'VE ALREADY BAGGED TWO OF THEM...
AND TWO IS ALL THERE WERE! CARLIN AND LORETTA!
YOU'RE ALLUSING US? YOU MUST BE JOKING, INSPECTOR!
YOU NEVER MET ANY KIDNAPERS, LORETTA. IN THE BRIGHT LIGHTS OF THEIR CAR, YOU COULDN'T HAVE SEEN THE LICENSE PLATES OR THE FIGURES IN THE FRONT SEAT!
THREE MEN COULDN'T HAVE DRIVEN AWAY FROM THE CABIN SHORTLY BEFORE I ARRIVED THERE. THE JERSEY POLICE HAD BEEN COVERING EVERY ROAD INTO THE WOODS FOR HOURS! TRY THESE HANDCUFFS. THEY'LL HOLD YOU BETTER THAN THOSE ROPES YOU USED TO TIE YOURSELF UP!
THAT LEFT JUST ONE QUESTION: WHO MAILED THE RANSOM NOTE? THE ANSWER: CARLIN SMEDLEY. HE DROPPED IT IN THE MAILBOX IN HIS OFFICE BUILDING, LATE ON FRIDAY... THE BUILDING WAS CLOSED OVER THE WEEK END...
DEPOSIT MAIL HERE
SO THE LETTER WASN'T PICKED UP UNTIL MONDAY MORNING... THAT'S WHEN LORETTA PRETENDED SHE SAW A CAR ACROSS THE ROAD.. AND JEROME SMEDLEY SHOOK HIS CANE... AS HE ALWAYS DID WHEN HE BECAME EXCITED!
YES, THAT RACKET WAS COOKED UP BY CARLIN AND LORETTA AS A WAY TO GET SOME OF THEIR RICH UNCLE'S MONEY. THEY COULDN'T WAIT FOR HIM TO DIE AND LEAVE THEM ALL OF IT... SO THEY WOUND UP WITH NOTHING!
The END

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

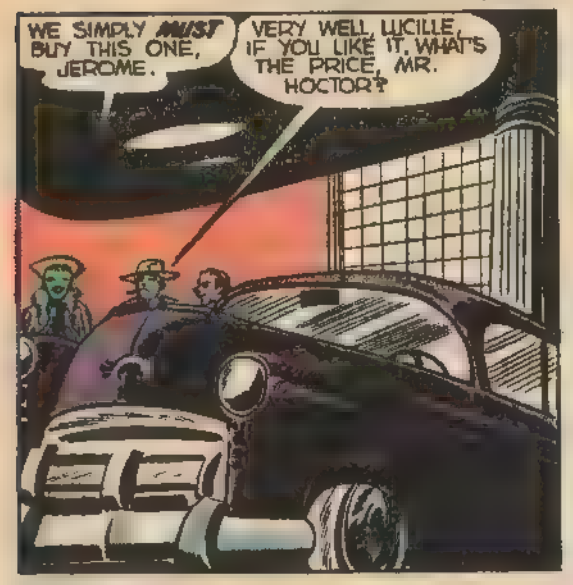
CHECK and DOUBLE CHECK

HERE'S A NEW SWITCH THAT GIVES A STREAMLINED TWIST TO A TIME TESTED SWINDLE! LET'S PICK IT UP WHERE IT STARTED, IN THE SHOWROOM OF AN AUTO DEALER WHO HANDLED A VERY FINE MAKE OF CAR IN A PROSPEROUS UPSTATE CITY...

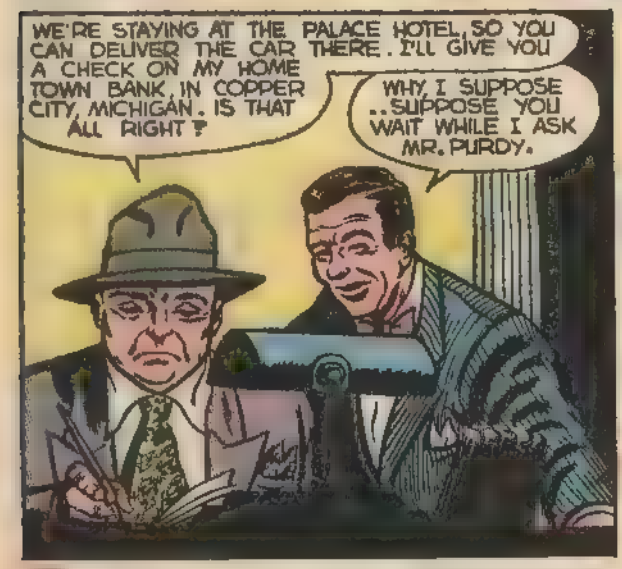
OH, JEROME, LOOK AT THE CARS IN THIS SHOWROOM! SO MODERN AND STREAMLINED!
HMMM... SHALL WE HAVE A LOOK AT THEM, MY DEAR?
BOB FORGIONE

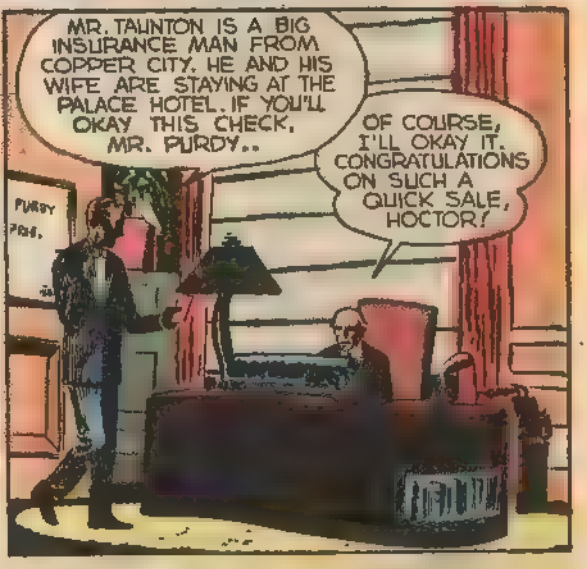


RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION



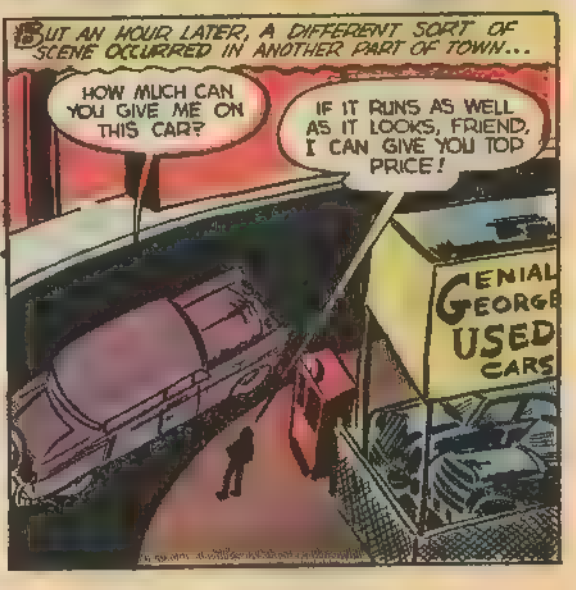
LET'S SEE.. HMM.. WITH ALL ACCESSORIES, $5,250. NOW, WITH A PAYMENT OF ONE THIRD DOWN...
NEVER MIND FIGURING INSTALLMENTS. I'LL PAY THE FULL AMOUNT RIGHT NOW. MAKE OUT THE BILL OF SALE!


WE'RE STAYING AT THE PALACE HOTEL, SO YOU CAN DELIVER THE CAR THERE. I'LL GIVE YOU A CHECK ON MY HOME TOWN BANK, IN COPPER CITY, MICHIGAN. IS THAT ALL RIGHT?
WHY, I SUPPOSE .. SUPPOSE YOU WAIT WHILE I ASK MR. PURDY.

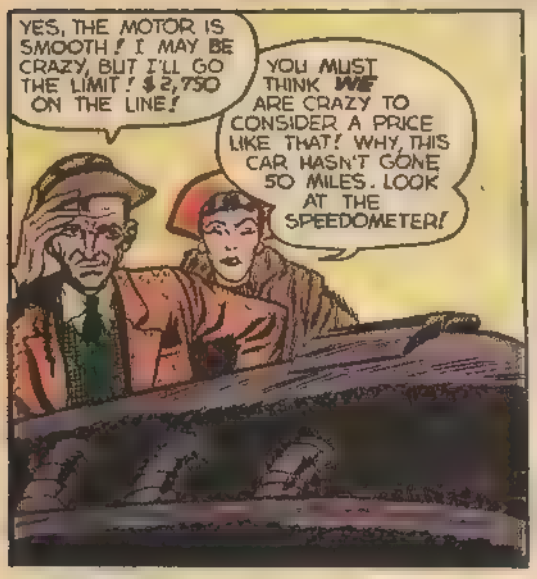

MR. TAUNTON IS A BIG INSURANCE MAN FROM COPPER CITY. HE AND HIS WIFE ARE STAYING AT THE PALACE HOTEL. IF YOU'LL OKAY THIS CHECK, MR. PURDY..
OF COURSE, I'LL OKAY IT. CONGRATULATIONS ON SUCH A QUICK SALE, HOCTOR!
PURDY PRES.

SO THAT VERY DAY, WHICH HAPPENED TO BE FRIDAY, THE CAR WAS DELIVERED LATER IN THE AFTERNOON...

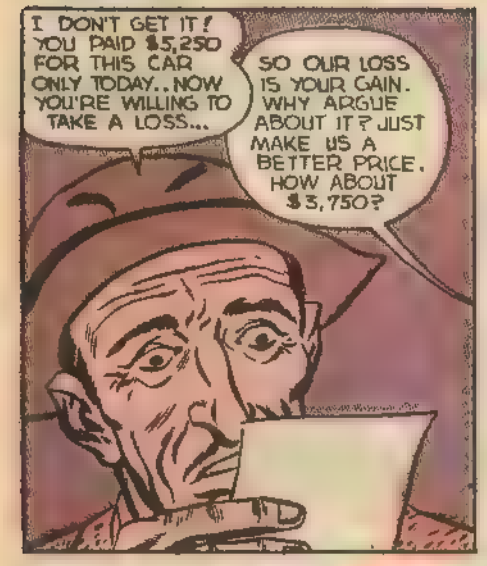
BUT AN HOUR LATER, A DIFFERENT SORT OF SCENE OCCURRED IN ANOTHER PART OF TOWN...



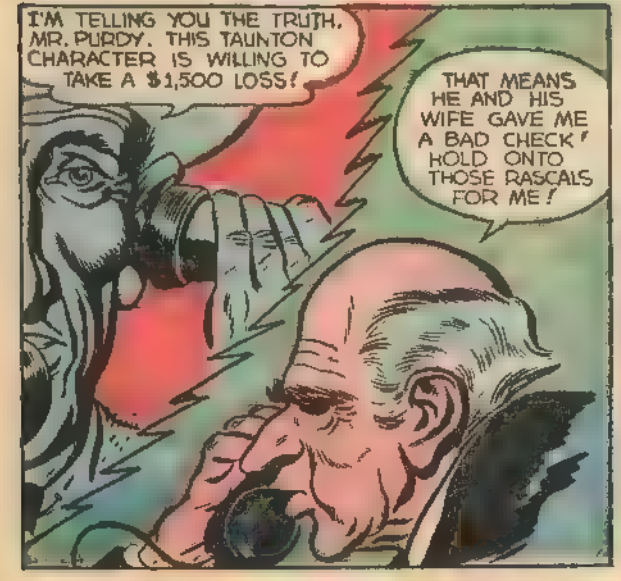
RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

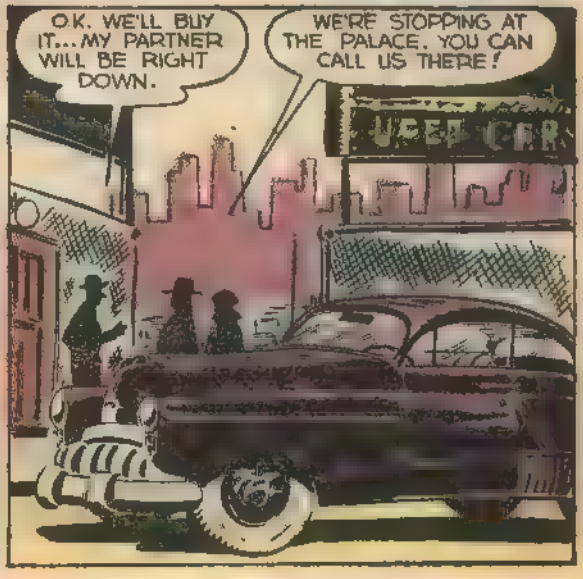

YES, THE MOTOR IS SMOOTH! I MAY BE CRAZY, BUT I'LL GO THE LIMIT! $2,750 ON THE LINE!
YOU MUST THINK WE ARE CRAZY TO CONSIDER A PRICE LIKE THAT! WHY, THIS CAR HASN'T GONE 50 MILES. LOOK AT THE SPEEDOMETER!

MY DEAR LADY. SOME PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO TURN BACK SPEEDOMETERS. I'LL AGREE THAT THIS CAR LOOKS BRAND NEW...
AND I'LL PROVE IT IS BRAND NEW. SHOW HIM THE BILL OF SALE, JEROME!


I DON'T GET IT! YOU PAID $5,250 FOR THIS CAR ONLY TODAY.. NOW YOU'RE WILLING TO TAKE A LOSS...
SO OUR LOSS IS YOUR GAIN. WHY ARGUE ABOUT IT? JUST MAKE US A BETTER PRICE. HOW ABOUT $3,750?

GENIAL GEORGE WOULD HAVE GRABBED THE DEAL, BUT THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT WAS CLOUDING HIS EAGER BRAIN... SO HE ACTED ACCORDINGLY.. AS WOULD BE EXPECTED...


I'M TELLING YOU THE TRUTH, MR. PURDY. THIS TAUNTON CHARACTER IS WILLING TO TAKE A $1,500 LOSS!
THAT MEANS HE AND HIS WIFE GAVE ME A BAD CHECK! HOLD ONTO THOSE RASCALS FOR ME!



RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

MEANWHILE, THINGS WERE POPPING FAST AND FURIOUS OVER AT PURDY MOTORS...
MR. HOCTOR, IT'S FRIDAY AFTERNOON..OUR BANK SAYS THEY'VE PROBABLY CLOSED IN COPPER CITY!
THERE'S NO RECORD OF ANY JEROME TAUNTON IN THE COPPER CITY DIRECTORY.
CALL GEORGE AGAIN.
GEORGE SAYS THE TAUNTONS WENT BACK TO THEIR HOTEL!
GET POLICE HEADQUARTERS, HOCTOR! WE'LL GRAB THOSE PHONEY CHECK PASSERS!
YES, MR. PURDY.
YOU'RE LEAVING US, MR. TAUNTON? WHY, I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO STAY ANOTHER WEEK.
I'M JUST DRIVING MRS. TAUNTON TO THE AIRPORT. SHE HAS TO LEAVE FOR THE COAST. SO HURRY WITH THOSE BAGS.
YOU SAY THAT MR AND MRS. TAUNTON HAVE ALREADY CHECKED OUT?
WHY, YES.. THEY LEFT FOR THE AIRPORT
HURRY, LUCILLE, AND CATCH YOUR PLANE! I'LL JOIN YOU AFTER I SELL THE CAR...
NO YOU WON'T! ARREST BOTH THESE SWINDLERS AND HOLD THEM!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

SO THE TAUNTONS WERE HELD OVER THE WEEKEND DESPITE THEIR PROTESTS.
BUT MY WIFE WAS GOING TO PAVE THE WAY ON A BIG INSURANCE DEAL ON THE COAST. WE STAND TO LOSE A LOT!
SO DO I.. ON THIS BUM CHECK!
UNTIL THE $5,250 CHECK REACHED THE COPPER CITY BANK AND WORD CAME THROUGH...
WELL, HOCTOR, WHAT DO THEY SAY? I'LL WAGER TAUNTON DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A BANK ACCOUNT THERE!
BUT..BUT THE BANK SAYS HE DOES... AND IT'S A BIG ONE ..MORE THAN $25,000
BUT COUNSELOR.. THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WE CAN DO...
THE FIRST THING IS TO RELEASE THOSE PRISONERS!
THAT WASN'T JUST THE FIRST THING ARTHUR PURDY COULD DO.. IT WAS THE ONLY THING UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES! THERE WASN'T A DOUBT THAT PURDY WAS DUE FOR PLENTY OF TROUBLE!
WE'RE RELEASING YOUR HUSBAND TOO, MRS TAUNTON. IT WAS ALL A MISTAKE.
YOU'RE TELLING ME? LET ME TELL YOU.. MISTAKES CAN PROVE COSTLY!
A FEW DAYS LATER...
A SUMMONS FOR YOU, MR. PURDY.
A DAMAGE SUIT FOR $100,000 ..BROUGHT BY THE TAUNTONS.
NEWS OF THE CASE CAUSED SUCH A SENSATION THAT MY OFFICE PROMPTLY HEARD OF IT...
THIS HAS A FAMILIAR RING, INSPECTOR. A COUPLE SUING FOR FALSE ARREST ON A BAD CHECK THAT TURNED OUT GOOD!
THOSE FACES LOOK FAMILIAR TOO, STEVE. LET'S GO THROUGH OUR FILES.

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

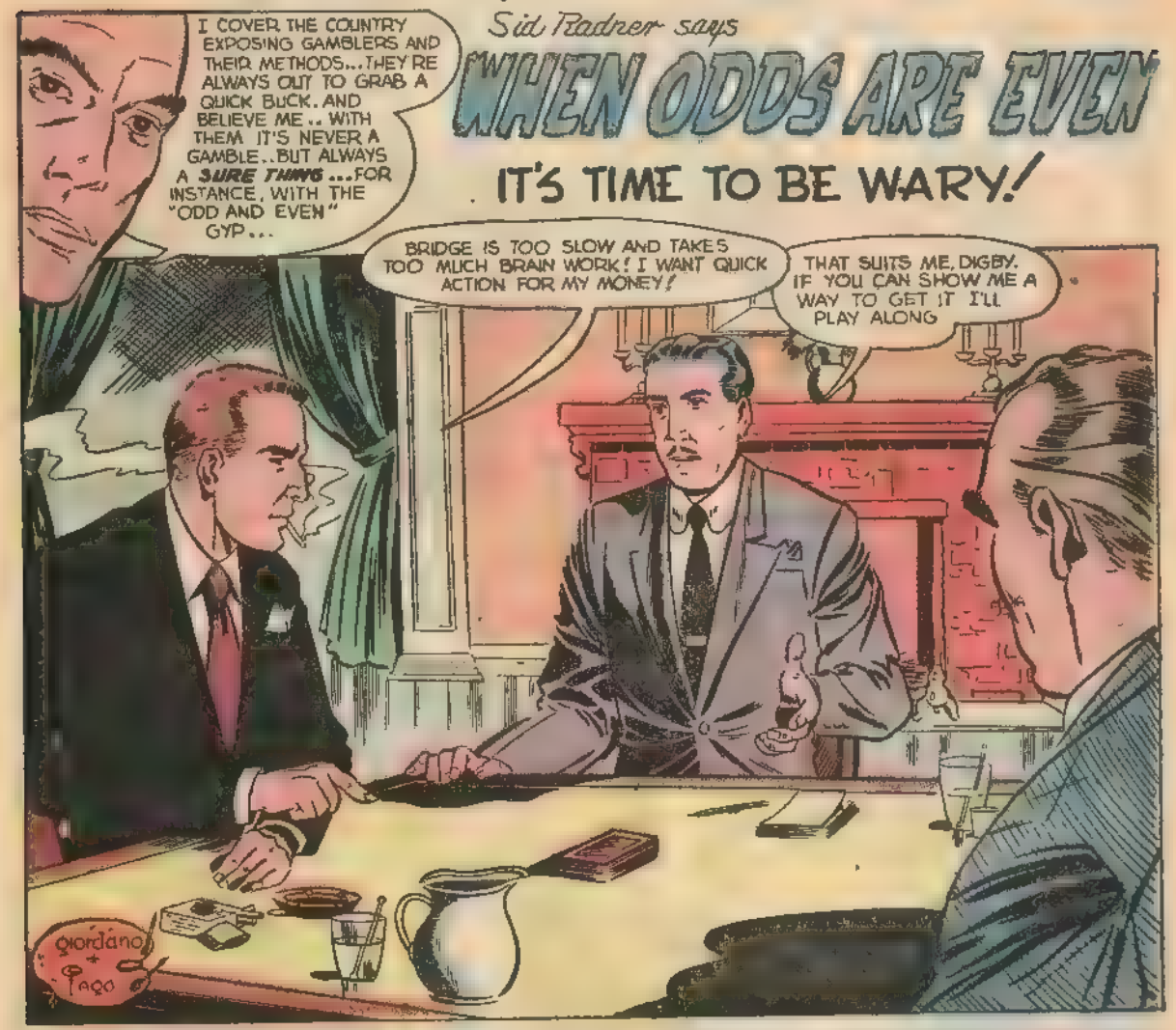
SO MR. AND MRS. TAUNTON HAD THEIR DAY IN COURT...
I WAS SO HUMILIATED, YOUR HONOR.. TO SAY NOTHING OF THE BUSINESS MY HUSBAND LOST
YES, THAT'S THE CHECK I GAVE TO PURDY MOTORS. THEY ACCEPTED IT AS GOOD.. AND IT AS GOOD!
IN VIEW OF THE OBVIOUS FACTS IN THIS CASE, I MUST AWARD DAMAGES TO THE PLAINTIFFS, JEROME AND LUCILLE TAUNTON...
IF YOUR HONOR PLEASES, I HAVE ANOTHER WITNESS... INSPECTOR J J O'MALLEY!
I NOT ONLY REMEMBER RACKETS, BUT THE FACES OF PEOPLE WHO WORK THOSE RACKETS. THE TAUNTONS LOOK VERY MUCH LIKE A COUPLE NAMED WINSTEAD, WHO ALSO SPECIALIZED IN DAMAGE SUITS...
I CAN ALSO FURNISH EVIDENCE THAT THE WINSTEADS ONCE USED THE ALIAS OF HARCOURT...
YOUR HONOR.. MY CLIENTS WISH TO DROP THIS DAMAGE SUIT!
THERE THEY GO IN THE CAR THEY BOUGHT FROM PURDY MOTORS. THEY'RE LUCKY TO GET OUT OF TOWN.
YES, THEY WERE LUCKY, BUT OTHER SUCH GYPS HAVE BEEN EVEN LUCKIER! THEY HAVE COLLECTED FULL DAMAGES WITH THIS RACKET, SO WATCH OUT FOR IT!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

Sid Radner says

WHEN ODDS ARE EVEN

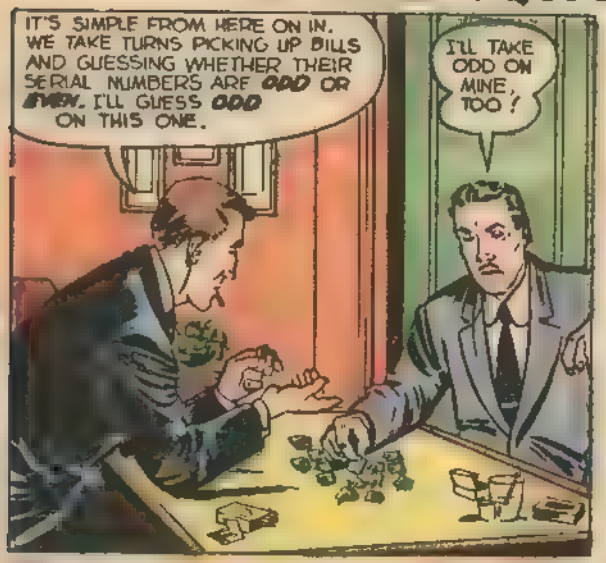
IT'S TIME TO BE WARY!


I COVER THE COUNTRY EXPOSING GAMBLERS AND THEIR METHODS... THEY'RE ALWAYS OUT TO GRAB A QUICK BUCK. AND BELIEVE ME.. WITH THEM IT'S NEVER A GAMBLE..BUT ALWAYS A SURE THING ...FOR INSTANCE, WITH THE "ODD AND EVEN" GYP...
BRIDGE IS TOO SLOW AND TAKES TOO MUCH BRAIN WORK! I WANT QUICK ACTION FOR MY MONEY!
THAT SUITS ME, DIGBY. IF YOU CAN SHOW ME A WAY TO GET IT I'LL PLAY ALONG
Giordano + Pago

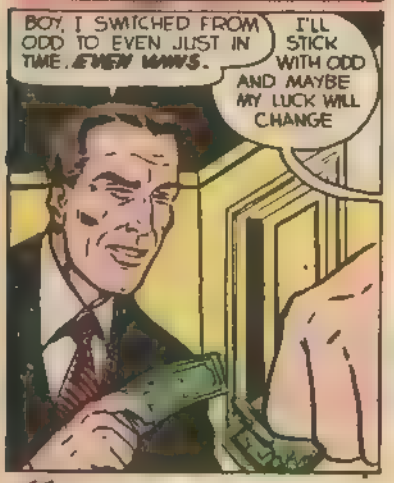
ALL WE NEED IS TWENTY ONE DOLLAR BILLS EACH. HERE'S MY TWENTY, AND TO SHOW YOU THAT IT'S ON THE UP AND UP, I'LL LET YOU GET IT CHANGED INTO SINGLES FOR ME. OH, YES. WE'LL NEED A BOX OF PAPER CLIPS, TOO!
PAPER CUPS. THAT'S AN ODD ONE!

..SO THAT ONLY THE UPPER LEFT CORNER OF THE BILL STILL SHOWS. NOW FASTEN IT WITH A PAPER CLIP, HARRIS.
OKAY, DIGBY. NOW WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION


IT'S SIMPLE FROM HERE ON IN. WE TAKE TURNS PICKING UP BILLS AND GUESSING WHETHER THEIR SERIAL NUMBERS ARE ODD OR EVEN. I'LL GUESS ODD ON THIS ONE.
I'LL TAKE ODD ON MINE, TOO!

SO IT WENT ON, WITH DIGBY WINNING ON EVERY GUESS HE MADE...



BUT HARRIS, HITTING ABOUT HALF THE TIME, DIDN'T PARTICULARLY NOTICE IT.

UNTIL FINALLY DIGBY HAD CORNERED ALL THE MONEY.. BUT EVEN THEN, HARRIS DIDN'T KNOW HE'D BEEN GYPPED.

NOW DID DIGBY ALWAYS CALL ODD OR EVEN CORRECTLY? FOLD A DOLLAR BILL AND LOOK AT THE UPPER LEFT CORNER. THERE, YOU WILL SEE A LITTLE LETTER!

IF THAT KEY LETTER IS A, C, E, G OR I, THE SERIAL NUMBER WILL BE ODD... IF IT'S B, D, F, H OR J, THE NUMBER WILL BE EVEN. DIGBY JUST COULDN'T MISS!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

INSPECTOR O'MALLEY SAYS: "WATCH OUT FOR THE SOFT JOB" RACKET

HERE'S ONE THE GYP ARTISTS KEEP REVIVING! IT BEGINS WITH AN ATTRACTIVE WANT AD IN THE NEWSPAPER...
BOY-OH-BOY! THIS IS MY MEAT! CHANCE TO TRAVEL AS A FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVE WITH ALL EXPENSES PAID! NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED! I'LL ANSWER THIS ONE, QUICK!
YOUR CREDENTIALS ARE FINE! BUT OF COURSE ALL APPLICANTS MUST HAVE A PHYSICAL EXAM TO SEE IF THEY CAN STAND A TROPICAL CLIMATE. JUST STEP INTO THE NEXT ROOM.
INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AGENCY
HERE ARE THE APPLICANTS, DOCTOR: WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO EXAMINE THEM RIGHT AWAY!
THAT EXAM WAS EASY. I KNEW I WAS IN SWELL SHAPE.
HEY... WHERE'S MY SUIT? I HAD $100 IN MY WALLET!
THEY'VE ROBBED ME OF AN $80 SUIT AND A $50 WATCH... WITH ALL MY CASH BESIDES!
POLICE HEADQUARTERS? A GUY JUST SKIPPED WITH ALL OUR CLOTHES AND MONEY.. HE RUNS A FAKE EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.
I NEVER HEARD OF THEM BEFORE TODAY! THEY PHONED MY OFFICE AND ASKED ME TO COME OVER HERE TO EXAMINE SOME APPLICANTS.

ONE MONTH'S RENT ON A FURNISHED OFFICE... A NAME PAINTED ON THE DOOR... A WANT AD IN THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER... AND NOBODY EVER HEARS OF THE CROOK AGAIN UNTIL HE BOBS UP ELSEWHERE WITH THE SAME RACKET!

J. J. O'Malley

RUSSIAN ROULETTE

Most passengers on the Mississippi River packets regarded Montana Kirby as a past master at the art of bluff. They were wrong; he was simply a gambler who would stake anything when he calculated that the odds were somewhat in his favor.

Montana would always cut for "double or nothing" if anyone suggested that he had been cheating them. This might happen at any time on the Robert E. Lee, the Natchez or any of the first class river boats that flourished on the Mississippi following the Civil War.

For a final showdown, Montana banked on Russian Roulette. Should another player draw a revolver and say: "I don't like your card play, mister," Montana would lean back and reply:

"Well, my friend, I see you have the very thing to back your argument. A colt, the good old equalizer. It's better than a pack of cards any day. Let's play a game with your gun that I learned from the Russians while they were still in Alaska. Take all the shells out of that revolver of yours — except one last cartridge."

A bit puzzled, the other man would comply. Then Montana would say: "Now spin the cylinder like a wheel so we won't know where the chamber is that contains the bullet." That done, Montana would add: "Whoever pulls the trigger might fire that bullet at the first try — or the second — or maybe the last. Agreed? Then lay your gun on the table."

From then on the game was in the bag for Montana. He would gesture to the money which had caused the dispute.

"There's only enough for one of us," was Montana's argument. "So we'll take turns with the gun. One will put the muzzle to his head and pull the trigger. If nothing happens, it will be the other's turn. They call it Russian Roulette. Fair enough?"

When the other man nodded — usually after some deliberation, Montana would ask:

"May I take first turn?"

Another nod. Montana would pick up the gun, point it to his head and pull the trigger

Then he would say: "Your turn."

Usually the other man would crawl out of it right then. Sometimes though, he would take his turn and Montana would then get set for a third try as he inquired "Shall we continue?" That was always enough. Montana would lay down the gun at the other man's headshake and pick up the pot instead.

It all passed as bluff on Montana's part until the night when he explained his game in detail and found himself beaten at his own system!

An observant salesman, traveling up river to St. Louis, fancied he saw some handfashioned marks on the back of a pack of cards and said so. When Montana reached, merely for a handkerchief, the salesman, a little sawed-off chap who answered to the name of Carter Burke, reached for a gun instead. Montana smiled when he saw the thing, a nice new shiny .22 of the sort that city folks thought could really shoot. It fitted perfectly with Montana's buildup for a round of Russian Roulette. The onlookers grinned too. They knew what was about to come.

"My, my — it's just right for your size," remarked Montana, "except that those bullets couldn't hurt you much unless they found the right spot."

"They can all right," returned Burke. "Do you want to test it out?"

"Why, certainly." Montana extended his forefinger and punched it against his right temple. "Mind if I poke one right here?"

"You don't get me to hand over my gun that easy," retorted Burke. "Maybe I'd get the first shot instead of you."

"You can have the second chance," decided Montana

"Just to see that only one of us is hurt why don't you remove all the cartridges from that toy, except one Then we'll go on from there."

A bit puzzled, Burke weeded cartridges from the gun and dropped them in his pocket. Montana gave him a nod.

"Now spin the cylinder, friend."

Burke complied and let Montana have the gun when he reached for it. Placing the muzzle against his temple, Montana gestured to the few hundred dollars on the table — his money and Burke's.

"We'll take turns, Burke, and the loser really loses. Catch?"

Burke caught and nodded. Montana pulled the trigger of the shiny .22 and it clicked. He passed the gun to Burke who promptly duplicated the manoeuver. There was another click of the trigger.

"My turn again." Montana put the gun to his head. "Unless you want to quit, friend."

"I'm not quitting."

The gun clicked under Montana's trigger tug he returned it to Burke with the bland comment: "You can quit now, if you pay double."

Burke didn't quit. While people's hearts were jumping to their mouths, he placed the muzzle to his head, pulled the trigger and another click told that the fourth chamber was empty like the three that preceded it. Burke handed the gun to Montana. For the benefit of the spectators, Montana stated:

"The game never went this far before. You think I like to bluff; the truth is, I play odds. By taking first try, I was risking only one chance in six. Burke here, with the second try, took one in five. Then I took one chance in four; his odds were reduced to one to three. Right now" — Montana weighed the gun — "the chances are even where I'm concerned. So I insist on doubling the odds. But if I survive, Burke will have to pay double again to get out of that sixth shot, where the odds in his case will be one in one!"

Calmly, Burke doubled his stake. Tension was fever high as Montana put the muzzle to his head and grimly pulled the trigger for the fifth time. People sank back with a gasp in unison as they heard a click. His smile was a bit sickly, Montana handed the gun to Burke, whose turn it was to be really sick. But Burke seemed on the cool side as he doubled the money on the table, then shoved Montana's hand away from it.

"I'm not quitting — yet." Burke put the gun to his forehead. "I'd rather be dead than see all that money go to somebody else. So here goes with the last chance."

Burke gave the trigger what everyone thought would surely be the fatal tug and the onlookers were frozen as they heard the gun click again. Montana blinked, then said:

"So you took out all six bullets from that Colt —"

"This isn't a Colt," interposed Burke. "It is the latest revolver made by Smith and Wesson."

"A good gun, an S & W," agreed Montana. "In fact so good, that I don't think one of its chambers would miss fire. As I said, you took out all six shells —"

"I took out six but not all."

"What's the game, Burke?" Montana blinked. "You take six cartridges from a six shooter and you've got none left."

"This happens to be a seven shooter," returned Burke. "That's why I bought it. A small gun but with a big cylinder that has a seventh chamber. I've played Russian Roulette myself, Montana, and like you, I prefer odds. This gun was perfect for it. Let the other chap have first blast if he wants it. That gives him four chances to kill himself against my three. To me, that adds up better than your count."

Montana had already doubled the stakes but he saw that Burke intended to insist on bumping them again. His hand trembling as he took the gun, Montana suddenly wheeled and flung it out through the cabin window where it splashed into the Mississippi. He clanked some silver dollars on the table in payment for Burke's weapon, then turned and stalked out on deck. Montana's career as a power on the river packets was ended.

"It's a funny thing," the steamboat captain said to the pilot when telling him what had happened below, "but I went on deck with Burke while he was counting the money. He laughed and said since his gun had gone overboard, he might as well send the bullets after it. So I counted them as he threw them —"

"And there were seven, I'll bet!" the pilot interrupted. "He took them all out, I reckon."

"No, there were only six."

"Then maybe he kept one in his pocket—"

"Mebbe. But look at this." The captain pulled a newspaper from his pocket. "I got this in Memphis where Burke came on board. He read aloud from an advertisement: "Announcing the new S & W seven chamber revolver now in maufacture —"

"Mebbe Burke had a factory model."

"He could have. Then mebbe again, he might have been carrying a regular S & W six shooter. They still make them, you know. Anyway, gun and bullets have gone overboard, so only Old Man River can give us the answer."

By the way of an exclamation point, the captain punctuated his final statement with a wad of tobacco juice that landed squarely in the Mississippi as though he had sent it there to inquire into Burke's secret.

INSPECTOR J. J. O'MALLEY SAYS: IT'S A GREAT RACKET WHEN THEY TELL YOU THAT . . .

YOU CAN'T LOSE

IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE IN FLORIDA, SPEAKING TO THIS CONVENTION OF CITRUS GROWERS. ORGANIZATIONS LIKE YOURS ARE THE BEST SAFEGUARDS AGAINST WILDCAT OPERATORS, LIKE THE PAIR WHO STAGED THE CITRUS CONTEST RACKET, A FEW YEARS AGO... IT BEGAN WHEN THE SWINDLERS CALLED ON SMALL ORANGE GROWERS...
YOU CAN'T LOSE, MR. STERLING, IF YOU SIGN UP WITH MUTUAL ORANGE DISTRIBUTORS. WHY, WE GUARANTEE A FIXED PRICE FOR EVERY CRATE OF CITRUS FRUIT WE BUY!
PROVIDED OF COURSE THAT YOUR FRUIT COMES UP TO M.O.D. REQUIREMENTS, WHICH IT DOES. WHAT'S MORE, THAT GIVES YOU A CHANCE AT THE $1000 PRIZE FOR THE BEST FRUIT GROWN IN YOUR AREA!
TELL ME MORE ABOUT THAT $1000 PRIZE, GENTLEMEN!
ROGER STERLING CITRUS GROWERS
FRANK FROLLO

YOU SIMPLY SUPPLY SAMPLE BOXES OF ORANGES AND GRAPEFRUIT TO BE SENT AT OUR EXPENSE TO EACH OF OUR REGIONAL JUDGES... SUCH AS NEW ENGLAND, MIDDLE ATLANTIC AND THE MID-WEST. THE BEST ENTRY GETS THE $1000 AWARD...

WITH $500 SECOND PRIZE, $250 THIRD, ALONG WITH SPECIAL AWARDS.
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME. I'LL SIGN UP!
COME ON, JACKSON. WE HAVE MORE STOPS TO MAKE!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

ROGER STERLING WASN'T THE ONLY ORANGE GROWER WHO FOUND THE CONTEST ATTRACTIVE... IT BEGAN TO SWEEP THE COUNTY FASTER THAN A BRUSH FIRE...
I'M NOT A REGULAR GROWER, MR. ELKIN, BUT I'M FIXING TO ADD SOME MORE TREES TO MY GROVE NEXT YEAR.
YOU'RE ELIGIBLE. JUST SIGN HERE, MR DOW WHAT CAN YOU LOSE?
YES WHAT COULD ANYBODY LOSE? THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAID AS THEY BROUGHT THEIR SAMPLE BOXES TO THE FREIGHT DEPOT FOR SHIPMENT TO THE JUDGES...
BY CRICKY, THIS MUTUAL ORANGE DISTRIBUTORS OUTFIT IS BRINGING THIS TOWN RIGHT BACK TO LIFE!
I HEAR HOW BARTON, THE BANKER, HAS CHARGE OF THE AWARDS. RECKON I'LL GO OVER AND SEE HIM.
YES, MR. STERLING, THE $2000 IN PRIZE MONEY IS ON DEPOSIT HERE IN THIS BANK!
GLAD TO HEAR THAT, MR BARTON I'M COUNTING ON WINNING A PRIZE!
GOOD LUCK, MR. STERLING, BUT YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF COMPETITION
MAYBE. BUT ANYWAY, WHAT CAN WE LOSE?
SO EVERY DAY, ANOTHER MUTUAL SHIPMENT WENT OUT OF POMELO CITY...
WHILE JACKSON AND ELKIN KEPT AS BUSY AS THE BEES THAT GATHER HONEY FROM THE ORANGE BLOSSOMS...
HERE COME THOSE MUTUAL MEN TO TALK TO US, TERRY.
RECKON WE'D BETTER JOIN THAT CONTEST, ZEB, AFORE IT GETS TOO LATE!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

As the end of the contest period approached, excitement grew to fever pitch...
Here's another deposit, Mr Barton, to take care of our freight shipments!
They're sure getting heavier and heavier!
With the various contestants talking about spending the prize money they hoped to win...
Yes, sir, Mr. Barton, I'm going to put that whole $1000 into a new orange grove!
Not a bad idea, Sterling, provided of course that you win!
BANK
Finally the big day came, ushered in by a brass band brought all the way from Jacksonville!
PRIZES
MALGIMATED ORANGE GROWERS CONTEST
$1,000 1st PRIZE
Now, ladies and gentlemen, we shall announce the M.O.G awards. First prize goes to J Wilson Ordway, $1000..
Second prize to Robert Wise, $500... Third prize to Arthur Ames, $250...
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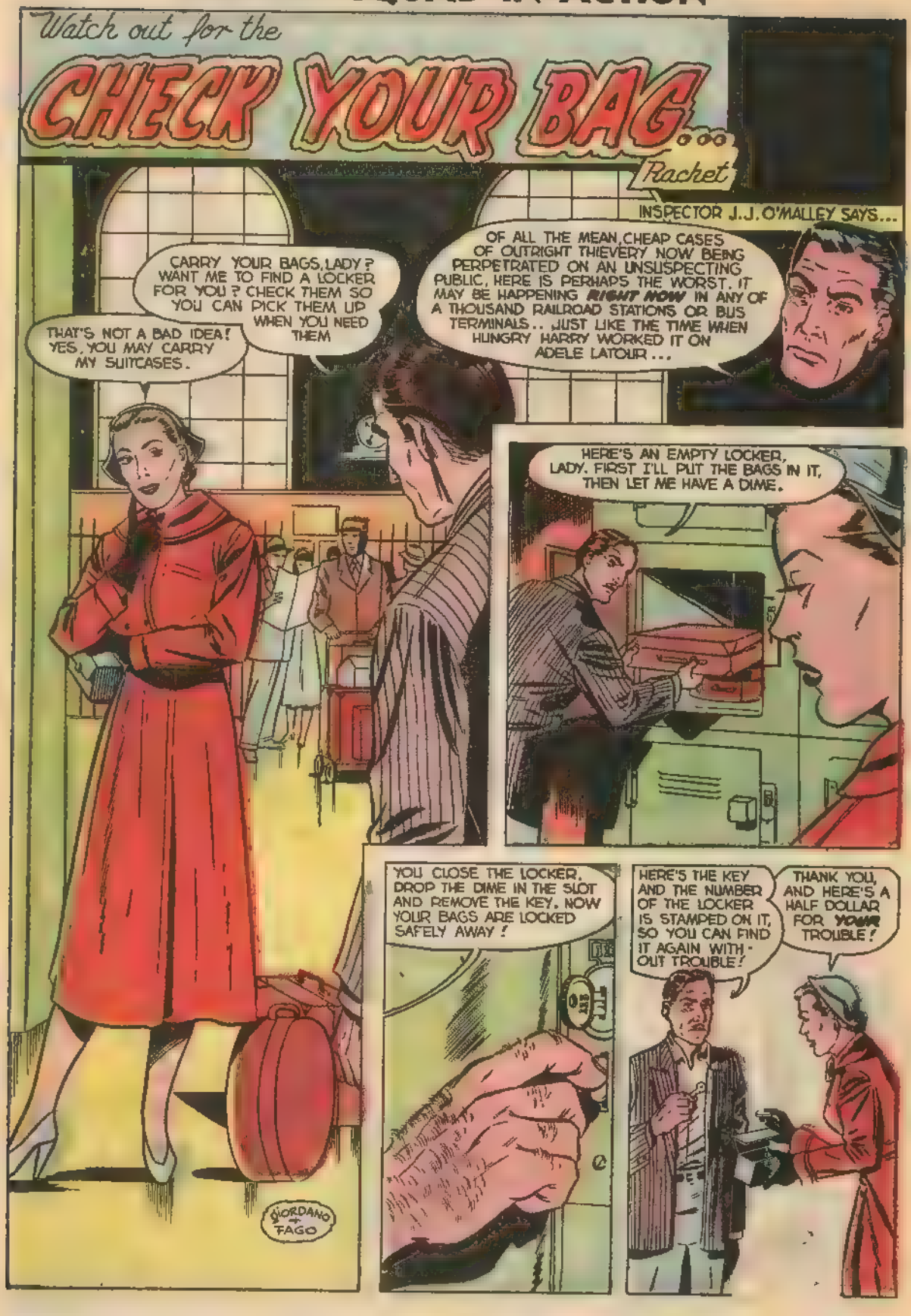
RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

YOU WERE RIGHT, MR. BARTON. TOO MUCH COMPETITION. BUT I'D LIKE TO BORROW SOME CASH TO BUY AN ORANGE GROVE.
WHY, CERTAINLY, IF YOU HAVE GOOD SECURITY!
HERE'S MY MUTUAL CONTRACT SAYING THEY'LL PAY A FIXED PRICE FOR ALL ORANGES THEY BUY. HOW'S THAT FOR SECURITY?
EXCELLENT. BUT FIRST YOU MUST PHONE NEW YORK TO COMFIRM IT.
HELLO, NEW YORK... WHAT'S THAT? YOU WON'T BE BUYING ANY MORE ORANGES? YOU SAY YOU'VE ALREADY BOUGHT THEM? I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
I UNDERSTAND HANG UP, STERLING!
JACKSON AND ELKIN SOLD THE BOXES OF CONTEST ORANGES TO THE NORTHERN BUYERS WHO JUDGED THEM! THE CONTEST WAS JUST A COME ON!
LET ME CATCH THOSE SKINFLINTS!
WHERE YOU GOING, ROGER?
BUZZARD SHOOTING! I'VE GOT TWO SHOTGUNS IN THE CAR. COME ALONG!
YOU WON'T NEVER BAG THAT PAIR OF BUZZARDS, ROGER!
RECKON NOT THEY GOT AWAY WITH THEIR HIDES LIKE THEY DID OUR ORANGES!
YES, THOSE CON MEN GOT AWAY WITH PLENTY! NEARLY 500 GROWERS PUT UP $25 WORTH OF ORANGES EACH, BRINGING JACKSON AND ELKIN MORE THAN $12,000 LESS THE $2,000 THEY GAVE OUT AS CONTEST PRIZES... THE FREIGHT COSTS? THEY CHARGED THE BUYERS FOR THOSE! NATURALLY, THE CONTEST WAS JUDGED FAIRLY, SO THE SWINDLE WOULDN'T STRIKE A SNAG... SO WATCH OUT FOR EASY MONEY... IT'S A SURE COVER UP FOR A GYP GAME!!!
THE END

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION


Watch out for the
CHECK YOUR BAG...
Racket
INSPECTOR J.J. O'MALLEY SAYS...
OF ALL THE MEAN, CHEAP CASES OF OUTRIGHT THIEVERY NOW BEING PERPETRATED ON AN UNSUSPECTING PUBLIC, HERE IS PERHAPS THE WORST. IT MAY BE HAPPENING RIGHT NOW IN ANY OF A THOUSAND RAILROAD STATIONS OR BUS TERMINALS.. JUST LIKE THE TIME WHEN HUNGRY HARRY WORKED IT ON ADELE LATOUR...
CARRY YOUR BAGS, LADY? WANT ME TO FIND A LOCKER FOR YOU? CHECK THEM SO YOU CAN PICK THEM UP WHEN YOU NEED THEM
THAT'S NOT A BAD IDEA! YES, YOU MAY CARRY MY SUITCASES.
HERE'S AN EMPTY LOCKER, LADY. FIRST I'LL PUT THE BAGS IN IT, THEN LET ME HAVE A DIME.
YOU CLOSE THE LOCKER, DROP THE DIME IN THE SLOT AND REMOVE THE KEY. NOW YOUR BAGS ARE LOCKED SAFELY AWAY!
HERE'S THE KEY AND THE NUMBER OF THE LOCKER IS STAMPED ON IT, SO YOU CAN FIND IT AGAIN WITHOUT TROUBLE!
THANK YOU, AND HERE'S A HALF DOLLAR FOR YOUR TROUBLE!
GIORDANO + FAGO

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

"NO TROUBLE AT ALL..UNTIL THE NEXT DAY, WHEN ADELE WENT TO PICK UP HER BAGS... SHE GAVE THE LOCKER KEY TO A PORTER, AND..."
THIS LOCKER IS EMPTY, MISS! ARE YOU SURE YOU DIDN'T FORGET TO PUT YOUR BAGS IN BEFORE YOU LOCKED IT?
WHY, HOW RIDICULOUS. THE MAN WHO CARRIED MY BAGS PUT THEM IN HERE. I SAW HIM!
WAIT NOW! MAYBE IT WASN'T THIS LOCKER. THIS LOOKS HIGHER UP, FOR ONE THING.
YOU'RE THE THIRD LADY WHO MISPLACED HER BAGS THIS WEEK! THEY ALL GET KIND OF CONFUSED.
ADELE LATOUR WASN'T CONFUSED, SHE WAS PLAIN MAD! THAT'S WHY SHE CAME TO MY OFFICE, HOPING I COULD SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING BAGS..."
WHAT BAFFLES ME, INSPECTOR O'MALLEY, IS HOW THE LOCKER GOT SWITCHED AROUND!
THAT NICE MAN WHO CARRIED YOUR BAGS WILL GIVE US THE ANSWER. I'M PUTTING MARY QUIGLEY, MY BEST OPERATIVE ON THE JOB OF FINDING HIM.
"IT WAS TOUGH HAULING FOR MARY, LUGGING HEAVY BAGS IN AND OUT OF THE DEPOT, ALL THE TIME AVOIDING THE REGULAR PORTERS ...BUT AFTER A FEW DAYS..."
CARRY YOUR BAGS, LADY? FIND YOU A CHECK LOCKER?
WHY, THAT WOULD BE JUST TOO LOVELY!
I'M SURE THAT'S THE SAME MAN WHO CARRIED MY SUITCASES! AREN'T YOU GOING TO ARREST HIM?
NOT YET. HE'LL BE BACK
THE LOCKER NUMBER IS 108, STEVE, AND HERE'S THE KEY HE GAVE ME.
BUT THIS KEY SAYS 263. THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE!
DON'T WORRY WE'LL FIX IT!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

YES, THERE WAS A "MISTAKE" BUT IT WASN'T ACCIDENTAL! TO FIX IT, STEVE PRYOR, ANOTHER OF MY OPERATIVES, TOOK OVER WHERE MARY QUIGLEY LEFT OFF... AND ONE HOUR LATER..."

HERE COMES THAT PHONEY NOW, STRAIGHT TO LOCKER 108!

THERE HE GOES WITH MARY'S BAGS, TO WEED THROUGH THEM! I'LL WAIT FOR HIM IN THE HOCK SHOP!

ONE MOMENT, CHUM. BEFORE YOU HOCK ALL THOSE PRETTIES, HAVE A LOOK AT THIS NICE SHINY BADGE!

VEEPERS! A COPPER!

WHY THE RUSH? YOU HAD PLENTY OF TIME TO SPARE WHEN YOU CARRIED MY BAGS FOR ME!

THERE'S ONE OF **MY** SUITCASES ON SALE IN THE WINDOW!

"THE ARREST OF HUNGRY HARRY SOLVED THE RIDDLE OF HIS RACKET ...HIS SYSTEM WAS TO DROP A **DIME** INTO AN EMPTY LOCKER AND TAKE THE KEY..."

"WE WOULD THEN CARRY A VICTIM'S BAG TO **ANOTHER** LOCKER, OBLIGINGLY PUT THEM AWAY, AND THEN SWITCH THE KEY FOR THE ONE HE ALREADY HAD!"

"SO THE VICTIM WOULD GO AWAY WITH THE KEY TO AN **EMPTY** LOCKER.. WHILE HARRY KEPT THE KEY TO THE LOCKER THAT CONTAINED THE BAGS..AND REMOVED THEM AT HIS LEISURE!"

263

263

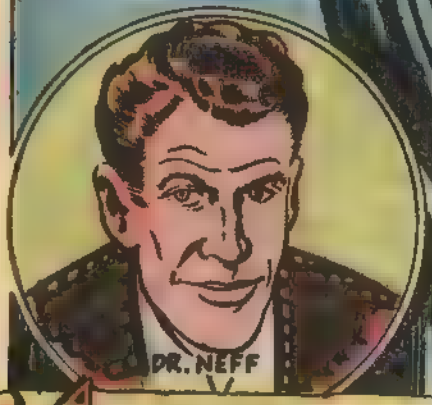
108

THE END

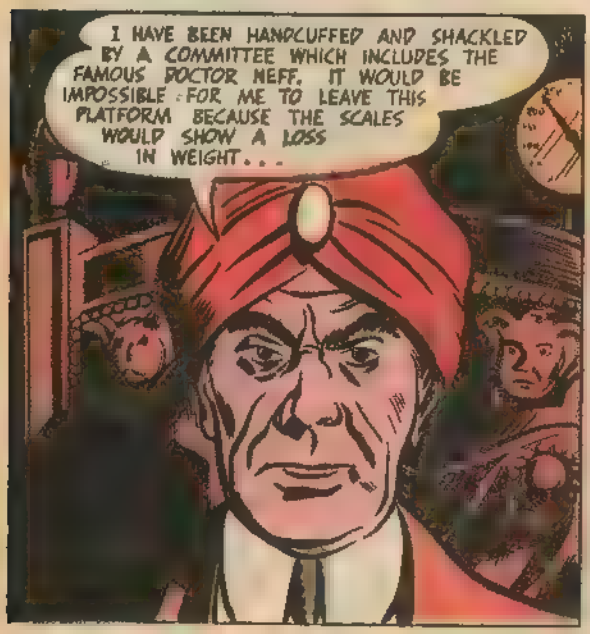
DOCTOR NEFF, THE GHOST BREAKER SAYS:

WHEN SPOOKS BEGIN TO ASK FOR CASH...

IT'S TIME TO WATCH OUT



AS A GHOST BREAKER, IT IS MY JOB TO EXPOSE FAKERS WHO CLAIM THAT THEIR "SPOOKS" ARE REAL... ONE OF THE MOST AMAZING CASES IN MY FILES IS THAT OF PROFESSOR ALDRIDGE MORDAUNT... HE INSISTED THAT PEOPLE TEST HIS POWERS IN A SPECIAL LABORATORY WHERE HE CLAIMED FRAUD WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE... SO I WENT TO ONE OF MORDAUNT'S "TESTS" AND HELPED THE COMMITTEE BIND HIM WITH CHAINS AND HANDCUFFS...


I HAVE BEEN HANDCUFFED AND SHACKLED BY A COMMITTEE WHICH INCLUDES THE FAMOUS DOCTOR NEFF. IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO LEAVE THIS PLATFORM BECAUSE THE SCALES WOULD SHOW A LOSS IN WEIGHT...

YET, WITHIN **TWO MINUTES** AFTER THE ROOM IS IN DARKNESS, A SPIRIT WILL APPEAR ABOVE YOUR HEADS AS PROOF OF MY SUPERNATURAL POWERS!

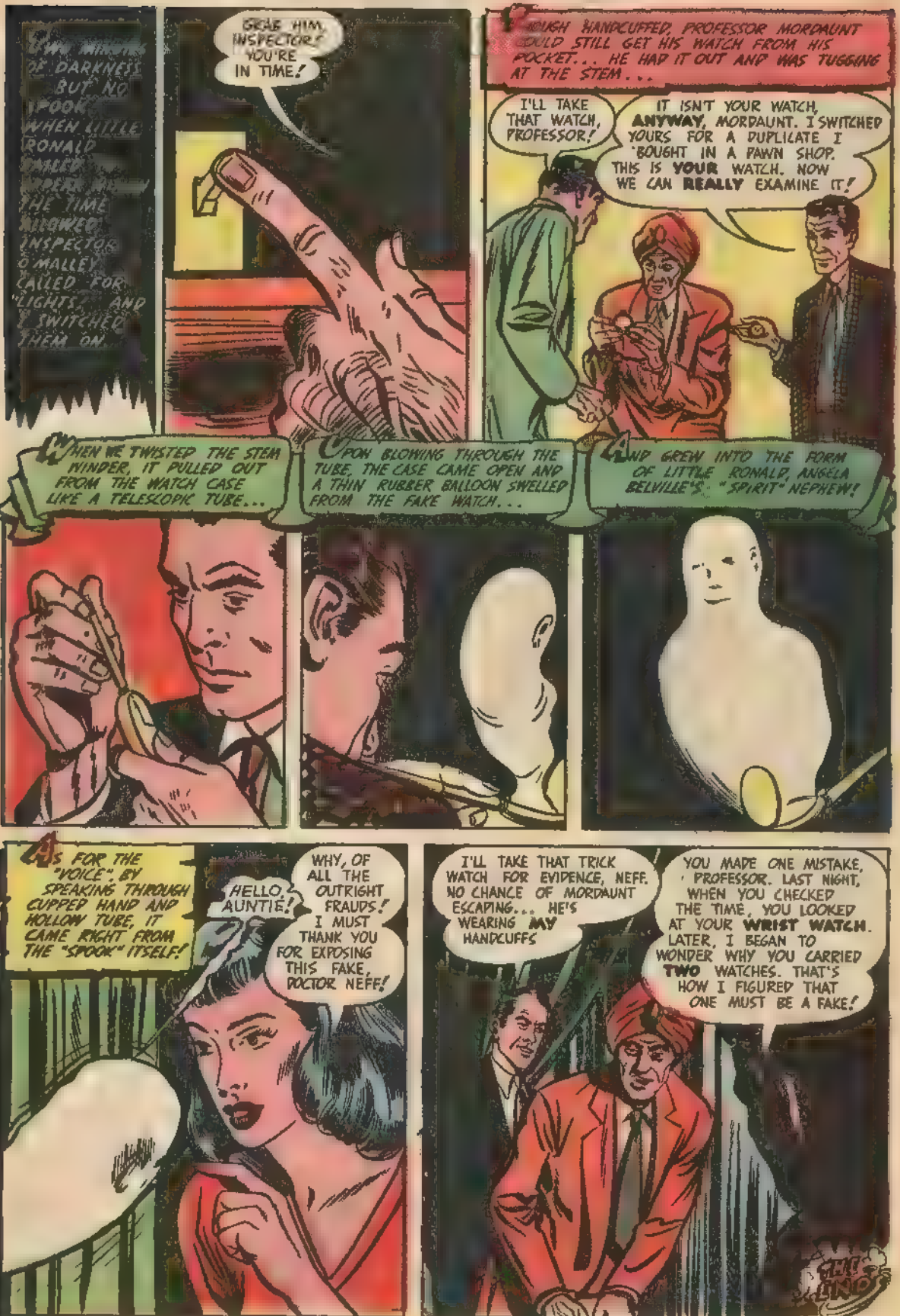
RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

WE TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS EXCEPT FOR A TINY ONE THAT SHOWED THE DIAL OF THE SCALES. THEN, HIGH IN THE DARKNESS A WEIRD SHAPE FORMED...
OHHH!
AUNT ANGELA! I AM YOUR NEPHEW RONALD, WHO LEFT YOUR EARTHLY WORLD LAST APRIL!
POOR, DEAR RONNIE! YOU WERE ONLY TWELVE YEARS OLD WHEN YOU DEPARTED FOR THE SPIRIT LAND!
DON'T GO, RONNIE! STAY AND TELL US MORE...
MY POWER IS FADING I MUST GO..
SHORTLY AFTER RONNIE'S SPOOK VANISHED, PROFESSOR MORDAUNT CALLED FOR LIGHTS AND WE FOUND HIM THERE, CHAINED EXACTLY AS HE WAS AT THE START.. AND NOT ONCE HAD THE SCALES EVEN WAVERED!
YOU MUST TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED, NEFF! I WAS IN A TRANCE, SO I WOULDN'T KNOW
YOU MATERIALIZED THE GHOST OF MY NEPHEW RONNIE! IT WAS WONDERFUL, PROFESSOR!
NOW THAT YOU HAVE EXAMINED THE HANDCUFFS AND THE CHAIR, I INSIST THAT YOU LOOK OVER THE THINGS I HAVE IN MY POCKETS...
MY FOUNTAIN PEN, MY WATCH, MY WALLET... A FEW OTHER ODDS AND ENDS.. NONE OF THESE COULD **POSSIBLY** ACCOUNT FOR THE SPIRIT THAT **YOU SAW!**

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

OH, PROFESSOR MORDAUNT... CAN'T YOU GIVE US A FURTHER TEST?
SORRY. I HAVE AN IMPORTANT LECTURE TO DELIVER IN HALF AN HOUR. BUT I SHALL BE GLAD TO SUMMON RONNIE'S SPIRIT AT MY NEXT TEST, TOMORROW EVENING!
PROFESSOR MORDAUNT WAS A FAKER WHO WAS AFTER ANGELA BELVILLE'S MONEY... OF THAT I WAS CERTAIN! BUT HOW TO PROVE IT? THERE WASN'T ANYTHING TO ACCOUNT FOR THE SPOOK THAT FLOATED OVERHEAD AND ACTUALLY TALKED TO US! I KEPT MULLING OVER THE DETAILS AS I WALKED DOWN THE STREET... AND SUDDENLY...
NOTHING SUSPICIOUS IN HIS POCKETS...
PEN...
WALLET...
WATCH...
LECTURE IN HALF AN HOUR...
I'VE GOT IT! I'LL TALK TO INSPECTOR O'MALLEY RIGHT AWAY!
FROM WHAT YOU TELL ME, NEFF, I THINK YOUR HUNCH IS RIGHT. WE'LL BOTH GO TO MORDAUNT'S TEST TOMORROW!
GOOD ENOUGH, INSPECTOR! MEANWHILE, I'LL LOOK AROUND THE PAWN SHOPS FOR THE ONE THING WE WILL NEED!
SEE ONE THAT LOOKS LIKE IT?
YES. THERE'S ONE THAT MAKES A PERFECT MATCH WE'LL BUY IT!
THE NEXT NIGHT, WE WERE AT MORDAUNT'S TEST... FIRST WE LOOKED OVER THE ARTICLES FROM HIS POCKETS... AND THEN...
MIND IF I LOCK YOU IN MY HANDCUFFS, PROFESSOR?
NOT AT ALL, INSPECTOR. BUT FIRST LET ME GATHER MY PERSONAL BELONGINGS NOW THAT NEFF IS THROUGH GAWKING AT THEM!
TURN OUT THE LIGHTS, INSPECTOR AND IN TWO MINUTES YOU WILL SEE THE SPIRIT OF LITTLE RONALD!
WE'D BETTER... OR I'LL CHARGE YOU WITH SWINDLING MRS BELVILLE!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION


I'M MINUS OF DARKNESS BUT NO SPOOK WHEN LITTLE RONALD CALLED "SPOOK" THE TIME ALLOWED INSPECTOR O'MALLEY CALLED FOR "LIGHTS"... AND I SWITCHED THEM ON...
GRAB HIM, INSPECTOR! YOU'RE IN TIME!
THOUGH HANDCUFFED, PROFESSOR MORDAUNT COULD STILL GET HIS WATCH FROM HIS POCKET... HE HAD IT OUT AND WAS TUGGING AT THE STEM...
I'LL TAKE THAT WATCH, PROFESSOR!
IT ISN'T YOUR WATCH, ANYWAY, MORDAUNT. I SWITCHED YOURS FOR A DUPLICATE I BOUGHT IN A PAWN SHOP. THIS IS YOUR WATCH. NOW WE CAN REALLY EXAMINE IT!
WHEN WE TWISTED THE STEM WINDER, IT PULLED OUT FROM THE WATCH CASE LIKE A TELESCOPIC TUBE...
UPON BLOWING THROUGH THE TUBE, THE CASE CAME OPEN AND A THIN RUBBER BALLOON SWELLED FROM THE FAKE WATCH...
AND GREW INTO THE FORM OF LITTLE RONALD, ANGELA BELVILLE'S "SPIRIT" NEPHEW!
AS FOR THE "VOICE" BY SPEAKING THROUGH CUPPED HAND AND HOLLOW TUBE, IT CAME RIGHT FROM THE "SPOOK" ITSELF!
HELLO, AUNTIE!
WHY, OF ALL THE OUTRIGHT FRAUDS! I MUST THANK YOU FOR EXPOSING THIS FAKE, DOCTOR NEFF!
I'LL TAKE THAT TRICK WATCH FOR EVIDENCE, NEFF. NO CHANCE OF MORDAUNT ESCAPING... HE'S WEARING MY HANDCUFFS
YOU MADE ONE MISTAKE, PROFESSOR. LAST NIGHT, WHEN YOU CHECKED THE TIME, YOU LOOKED AT YOUR WRIST WATCH. LATER, I BEGAN TO WONDER WHY YOU CARRIED TWO WATCHES. THAT'S HOW I FIGURED THAT ONE MUST BE A FAKE!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

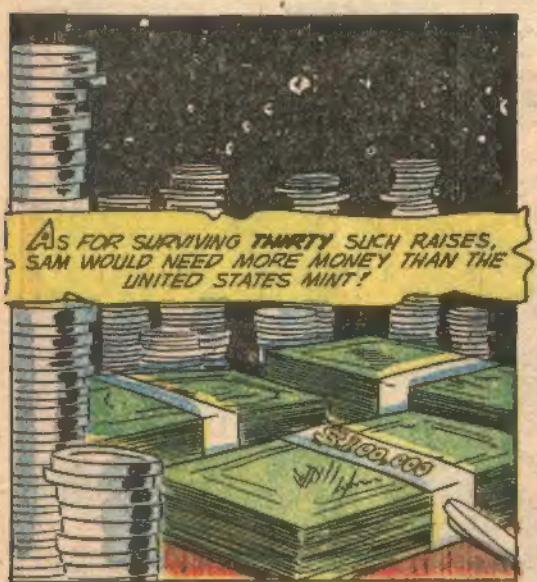
Sid Radner says... DON'T BE FOOLED BY POKER GAMES WHERE THE LIMIT STARTS SMALL.. WHEN SOMEBODY SAYS YOU CAN...
"BET THE POT"
YOU CAN BE SURE THE MOB IS OUT TO TAKE YOU!
IT STARTS WHEN SAM THE SAP LOOKS IN ON A FRIENDLY LITTLE BACK ROOM POKER GAME...
HI, SAM! WANT TO GET IN THE GAME? IT ISN'T A VERY BIG ONE.. WE'RE ONLY PLAYING NICKEL ANTE.
THAT SOUNDS JUST ABOUT RIGHT TO ME. IT MEANS NOBODY GETS HURT
WE'VE GOT A LIMIT, TOO. NO MATTER HOW GOOD A HAND YOU'VE GOT, ALL YOU CAN DO IS "BET THE POT" WHEN YOU WANT TO RAISE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN.."BET THE POT?"
YOU CAN PUT UP WHATEVER IS IN THE POT, FIFTY CENTS.. A DOLLAR...BUT NO MORE.
SOUNDS MILD, DOESN'T IT? BUT WHEN THEY'RE READY TO "TAKE" SAM, EVERYBODY "UPS" THE POT.. AND KEEPS ON RAISING IT!
THERE'S A DOLLAR IN THE POT. I'LL GO THE LIMIT.
THAT MAKES TWO BUCKS IN THE POT. I'LL UP IT TWO BUCKS.
I'LL RAISE IT FOUR!
I..I'LL JUST CALL...
EIGHT BUCKS IN THE POT? I'LL DOUBLE IT!
I'LL BET SIXTEEN DOLLARS! THIS HAND IS WORTH THE LIMIT!

RACKET SQUAD IN ACTION

SO SAM THE SAP IS CAUGHT SQUARELY IN THE MIDDLE... HE'S BEEN DEALT A WONDERFUL HAND.. FOUR KINGS.. BUT SOMEBODY ELSE HOLDS FOUR ACES... AND EVERYBODY IS UPPING THE POT THE LIMIT, THEIR PURPOSE BEING TO TAKE SAM'S FULL BANKROLL!

I..I'LL CALL... BUT THAT'S ALL THE CASH I HAVE, ANYWAY, I WIN WITH FOUR KINGS...
I'LL BE KIND HEARTED AND CALL TOO, SAM. SORRY, BUT THESE FOUR ACES COMPEL ME TO TAKE THE MONEY!

EVEN WITH A WINNING HAND, SAM WOULD HAVE BEEN FROZEN OUT... TEN RAISES, EACH "DOUBLING THE POT" WOULD BRING IT ABOVE $1000.. MORE MONEY THAN SAM EVER HAD IN HIS LIFE!
$1,000



IT'S AN OLD RULE, "NEVER PLAY POKER WITH STRANGERS." TAKE MY ADVICE AND NEVER PLAY IT WITH FRIENDS, EITHER, WHEN THEY MAKE THE POT THE LIMIT... YOU CAN'T WIN!
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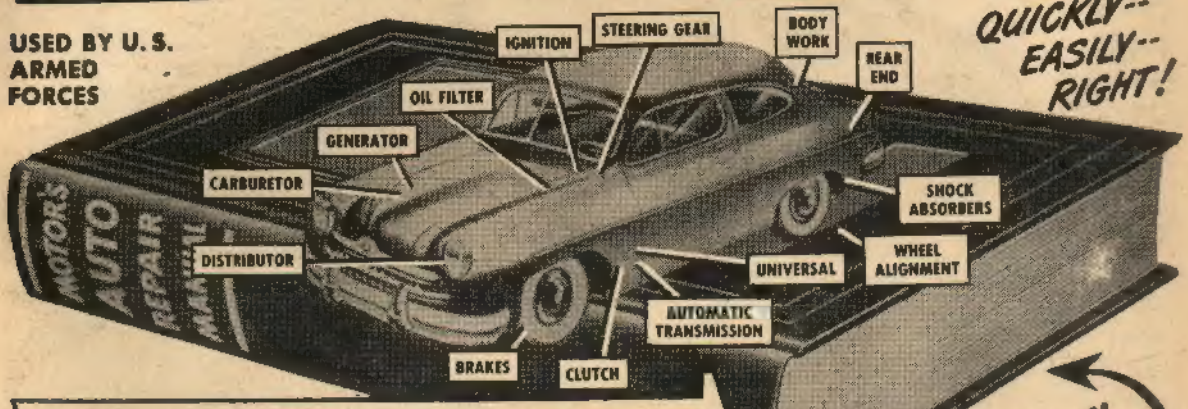

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